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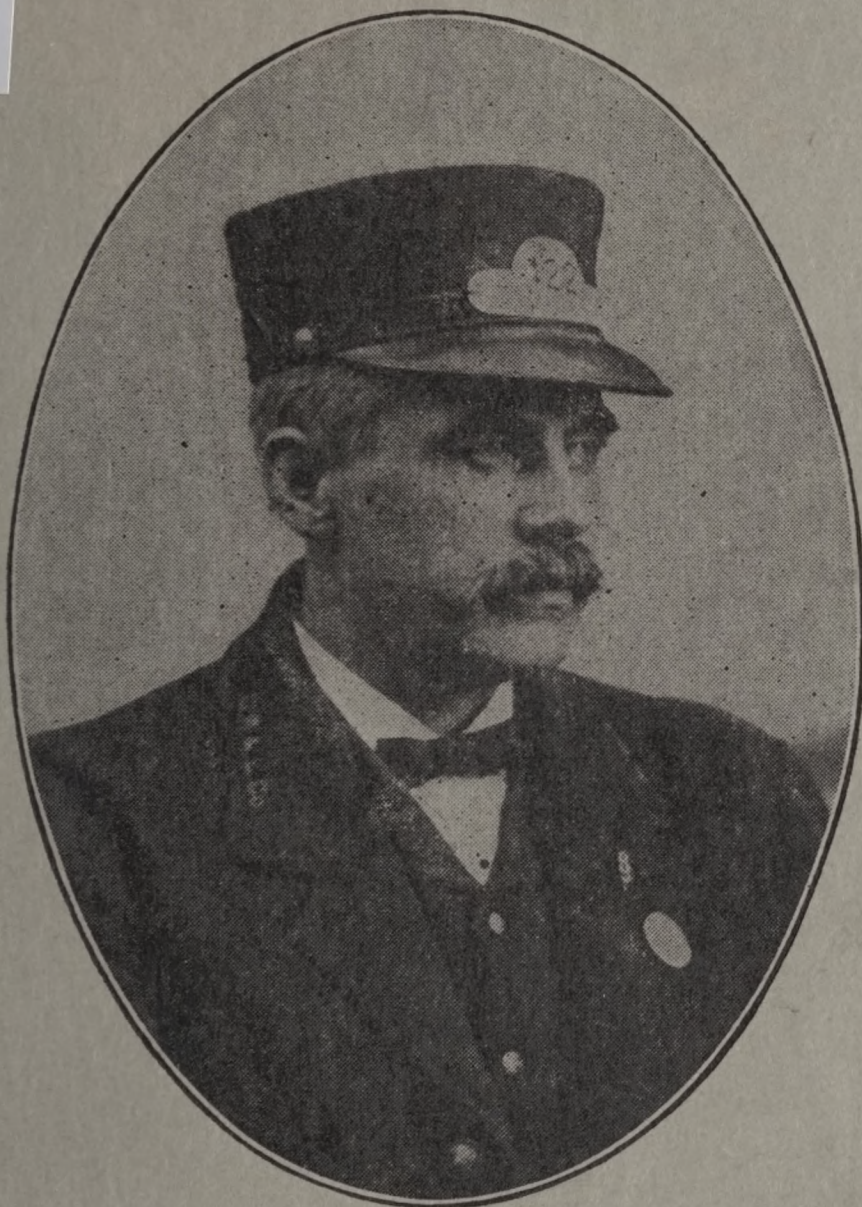
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THE GUIDE'S STORY

A FILIPINO ROMANCE



HADEN CROUCH

PRICE 15c.

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The Guide's Story

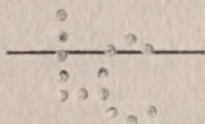
A FILIPINO ROMANCE

The Facts Around which this Fiction is Woven
were gathered up while seeing service in
the Philippine Islands

BY

HADEN CROUCH,

Ex-Sergeant of the Seventeenth U. S. Infantry



1910:
COLUMBUS,
OHIO

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The Child's Story

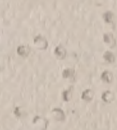
A HISTORY OF THE

The first of the series which is a history of the
the children of the world
the children of the world

BY

HAROLD GIBSON

Illustrated by the author and H. B. Brown



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THE GUIDE'S STORY

A FILIPINO ROMANCE

DURING the three years that I spent as a soldier in the Philippine Islands, I picked up much information regarding the different customs and religious rites of the wild tribes that inhabit the mountainous region of the most northern part of Northern Luzon. While a Battalion of our Regiment, the Seventeenth Infantry, was stationed at Biambang, in 1900, we received word from some friendly natives that General Macabolis, with several hundred soldiers, had gone into camp in the Bulcacon Hills, a chain of steep, rocky mountains, about two days' march from Biambang. We set out at once under command of General Smith. We reached the mountains just as the sun was setting, and only halted long enough to partake of a light supper, then on again. After an all night's climb over rocks, through gulleys, and masses of brush and bramble, piloted by a native guide, two of our companies reached the place where they had been intrenched behind some rocks. The other companies had skirted the base of the hills to intercept them should they go down that way, but while some of his men and our two companies were engaged in a stiff skirmish, General Macabolis, and the greater part of his

men got away down the other side of the mountain, the other companies not getting around in time to intercept them. Just where we had the skirmish, several trails converged, so while the rest went on up the hill, I was left in command of a detachment to guard the trails. I left a part of the detachment on guard and took the rest and went down a sort of rocky gully to look for stragglers, and had the good luck to capture General Montenegro, the next in command under General Macabolis. You may be sure we were very much elated over our good luck. All that day we searched among rocks and gulleys for more of the enemy, but was disappointed. It was a very tired and dilapidated looking lot of soldiers that went into camp that night on top of the mountain.

After supper the boys sat around smoking, and talking over the events of the past twenty-four hours. It was a beautiful night in early summer; the full moon shed its glorious light over the mountain, and such a moon—no one who has never seen them, can form an idea of the beauty of the nights in those far off isles, when luna hangs low in the heavens like a silvery globe, or seems to sit, a very queen of night, enthroned upon the top of some mountain, while the southern cross flames a path of glory all down the southern sky. Tired as I was I was filled with a sort of restlessness which was aggravated by the monotonous och-you, och-you, the cry of a species of lizard that infest the whole island. One of them was in the bushes near where I was sitting and kept up its everlasting croaking until I could not stand it any longer, so I walked away from the camp and rambled on until I was halted by one of the guards on outpost. I then

started to retrace my steps. I had gone part of the way when I saw some one standing in the shadow of trees. My first thought was that it was some of the enemy that had been hidden all day and was now trying to make a get-away, but the thought had hardly passed through my mind before he turned his head and I saw it was Lope, the native that had guided us up the mountain. I had seen a great deal of Lope; he had been with us for some time, acting as guide and interpreter. He seemed more intelligent than most of the guides we came in contact with; he spoke Spanish fluently, English fairly well and several native dialects. He was no longer young; his naturally long raw-boned features were seamed with deep lines, and from just below the right eye there ran an ugly scar down the cheek in a sort of curve, which gave him a fierce kind of look, but all the same, he was a pretty good old scout, and when it came to climbing mountains, or a brisk march over rice ridges, he could wind the best of us. He had always been very polite and friendly to me—I had at one time granted him a small favor and he had never forgotten it. When I saw who it was I spoke to him.

"Good evening, senor," he said as he came up to me. I sat down on a boulder and he stood beside me. Neither of us spoke for some time, then he said softly:

"Is the senor sad? Does the moonlight bring thoughts of the far away home to thy heart?"

His words brought a lump to my throat and I could not answer him for fear of betraying my emotion, for the plain truth of the matter was, that I was suffering from an intense longing for a sight of home and the loved ones

waiting there for my return. I bowed my head in answer.

"It is even so," he murmured. "Heart calls to heart across the many miles of land and sea; memory is the magic mirror wherein we see reflected the faces of the absent ones. Love, *senor*, is a strange thing; it sends its message to us in many ways—in the song of a bird, the perfume of a flower, or the wild beating of the waves, when the storm lashes them to madness. It comes from we know not where; its little god will perch upon our shoulder and shoot fiery darts at our heart. Be it for our joy or our sorrow, the love of friendship is a grand thing, but the love that binds a man and woman together in bonds that can not be severed by time or eternity is grander still. Yes, *senor*, even I have known such love."

I was too surprised at the depth of feeling that his words displayed, the eloquent expression of such beautiful sentiments, to do more than sit and stare at him—answer him, I could not.

"You are surprised, *senor*," he said, "that such as I could know aught of love, but I was not always as I am now, an old man, and there was a time when I had better looks, but time and trouble will cut furrows in the smoothest brow, and hollow out the roundest cheeks; and then, this scar has given me an ill look. No, I am no beauty now, but at one time I was not such a monster of ugliness and Dolores loved me. Yes, she loved me with a love that was sublime, but perhaps I tire the *senor*."

No, indeed, I replied, I am glad to have you talk

to me and I have listened with great pleasure to what you have been saying.

"Senor, I feel that you are indeed a friend, and to a friend only could I show the things that my heart holds sacred; to whom but a friend can one unburden their mind when the thoughts of the past come crowding in and the heart cries out for sympathy. Your kindness is great, indeed."

That is all right, Lope, I replied. I will be your friend, and you can unburden your mind to me whenever you feel inclined to do so.

"I thank you," he said. "I have not felt the need of a friend for many years as I do tonight, for long ago my heart became like a cemetery, wherein lay buried my ambition and all my hopes. Since then I have not cared for anything much but followed on where fate led me. Now, senor, I feel that the last link in my chain of destiny is about to be forged; that I will soon go hence to the great beyond and my eyes will behold the hidden glories. I will put off this aged form and be as I was when Dolores learned to love me, and then she will come again, as she did three nights ago, walking down a shining path of light, holding out her little hands to me, and those little hands will lift me up to the moon valley."

Why, Lope, I said, I thought I was homesick and had the blues, but you have certainly got a worse case of them than I have. You have been dreaming things that has unstrung your nerves. I will see the doctor when we get back to quarters and get him to give you some medicine. You must not think of passing out yet a while.

Why, Lope, old boy, we could not spare you; we need your help, so think no more about it.

"Ah, senor," he said, "those words of thine are like sweet music to my ears; it is good to know that our work is appreciated, and right glad I am of that. I have had the opportunity of knowing you and the people of your country and proud, too, that I could be of service to them, but friend, you do not understand me I see; you think that I have been dreaming dreams. No, senor, I am not sick, neither have I been troubled with dreams, and don't think I am sad, for the thought that I may soon be reunited with Dolores fills my heart with an unutterable joy. But tonight I had a longing for some one in whom I could confide, some one that could understand the need I felt of sharing my thoughts. I know not why I speak thus to you, except it be that I feel you are my friend, and then you remind me of a friend of my youth, a young Englishman, a rare good fellow was Arnold, and a friend to trust at all times, ever ready to help with both words and deeds; he gave his life for me, senor, for me and Dolores, and the memory of that deed lives ever in my heart. Would the senor care to hear how he come to make such a sacrifice?"

I would like very much to hear it, I said. I had forgotten my own troubles, and was most anxious to know who Dolores was and what had happened to poor old Lope to unbalance his mind, for I certainly thought him a little unbalanced after hearing him talk of seeing Dolores come walking down a shining path of light. But here is the story as he told it to me, and you can judge

for yourself if it be the raving of a mad man, or if it was really true that there ever existed such a love as that which bound him and Dolores—a love that had lived in his heart all those years, and kept the image of his lost loved one ever before his mind; a love that lived on even beyond the grave, and was strong enough to bridge the space of time and make a path over which her spirit came to him as he said it had three nights before, walking down a shining path of light.

LOPE'S STORY.

“I am a Mestizo; my father was a Spaniard, my mother a native woman from Marona.* She was of a people somewhat different from the other tribes of the island. There are many legends among her people of the time when they first came to these islands, some two or three hundred years ago; also of a time that goes back almost to the beginning of all things. They were moon worshipers, and believed that they were the descendants of a people that had, when the world was new, inhabited a sort of celestial place where death was unknown, and they lived, so the legends say, in a pleasant valley that was watered by many crystal streams and filled with beautiful things, such as the eyes of mortal man has never looked upon, and over that valley there hung, at all times, a silvery moon, shedding a soft radiance all about, filling each heart with the light of love, and all

* See our Islands and their people.

things were in harmony, and the moon was their god, and they worshipped it as their giver of life and joy. But there came a time, so the legends say, when their god became angry at them and hid his face behind dark clouds, and there came before them a mighty spirit wrapped about with flames and the spirit drove them forth from the valley and drew a heavy wall of mist before their eyes, so they could no longer look upon the things celestial. All was darkness around them, and they were sore afraid and cast themselves down and prayed to their god to bring them into his presence again, but he would not, but after a while he repented somewhat and sent a beautiful spirit to them saying, 'that some time he would recall them, but not until they had wandered for some time in the land of mist, then by the way of death they would come once more to the valley of moonlight.'

The legends say that they drifted away from the moon valley and wandered over all the earth and some of their descendants came to these islands in a great ship of war, and they did become christians and no longer worshipped the moon god. I had been raised under the care of an uncle, a brother of my mother. He was a padre of the Catholic church. Somehow I always believed in those old legends, and often when the moon shed a soft lustre over the hills, and threw its silvery beams among the waving palms, I have been filled with an ecstasy of longing for the time when my eyes should behold the beauties of the lost moon valley. My uncle, good, pious soul, was much concerned for me, and implored me to cast from my heart such pagan thoughts. A very learned man he was, and good. He had been sent to

Spain to be educated for a missionary priest. He had labored among the heathen for many years, but at the time I was with him he was at Manila, and it was there that I met the young Englishman who later became the friend of my heart. I was about twenty years of age at that time. Arnold Travers was his name. His father was the owner of a line of vessels that traded between England and the islands. Arnold had come out to the islands to learn something of the business, but more, I think, for the sake of adventure. He wished to learn the Spanish, and I was anxious to learn English and so we spent much time together, and there grew up between us a friendship that bound us together like brothers, even when Dolores came into my life, and our very souls were bound together by the bonds of a mighty love.

"Arnold and I were still like brothers; Dolores was also a Mestizo. Her mother was a Tagalog and her father was Senor Jose Mendeze, a Spaniard. Her mother had died of the plague when she, Dolores, was a small child. She had lived many years with the good sisters of St. Augustine. Her father had lately brought her from the convent. We had met and loved each other, but her father looked not upon our love with favor. He was a villain who loved the good things of life, and cared little how they were obtained so that he could live on the fatness of things, and have much red wine to drink. When I besought him to give Dolores to me in matrimony he set as the price of her hand a thousand pieces of gold, to be a dowery for himself. I could not pay so much and he cursed me and called me a pig, and told me Dolores was not for the likes of me,

but for some Spanish officer, or man of rank, who would be willing to pay much money for such rare beauty. My uncle, the padre, made him an offer of a fair amount but it was not enough and he would not listen to him when he made a talk to him in my favor, for look you, senor, he cared nothing for priest or church; he forbid me to hold speech with Dolores, but we found a way to outwit him. With the help of my young friend, many is the tricks we played on him. Much deceit and much money did Arnold use to draw away the eyes of the old villain so that Dolores and I could hold conversation. Often he held him at the dice or poured the red wine down his rapacious throat. Well, senor, one day he enticed him over to Cavite, with the promise of much pleasure in the way of a big dinner, wine and dancing girls, so thinking we had the day to ourselves, we stole away, Dolores and I, down the river in a little boat I had of a friend, and a long, sweet day it was. We had much happiness of being together, and I told Dolores of the legends of my mother's people, of the valley of moonlight, and she, sweet saint, was overcome with fear lest I be not christian, but pagan. She walked away from me and stood praying and crossing herself, and my heart became as a stone and was heavy with fear, lest she would cease to love me, and I cried to her, Dolores, Dolores, dost thou no longer love the pagan. She gazed upon me with her beautiful eyes, eyes of lustrous black, yet soft and tender, and they seemed to look into the inermost part of my soul, and read all the secret thoughts hidden therein. She begged of me to put away from my mind such unchristian thoughts, but when

I would not promise to do so she was much hurt, and cried out to me 'that if I loved her to say that I did not believe those old legends.' But I only hung my head; I could not lie to her and say I did not believe them, for I did believe, and do yet, that when we put off this form of clay that our souls will pass the wall of mist and we will find again the lost moon valley.

"Then did the tears fall fast from her eyes, and she would not speak to me but held silent communion with her heart, and I felt as if the life was going from me; a numbness crept over me and I fell at her feet. I know not what it was that overcome me so, unless it was the thought that I had lost Dolores' love, but the numbness soon passed; I came to myself and found Dolores kneeling by my side calling wildly to all the saints to witness that she loved me better than life, and would follow me anywhere—to the valley of moonlight or to the valley of darkness—if only I would come back to her and forgive her. Poor child, she thought I was surely dead. Were you ever in love, senor? If so then thou knowest how the words of the loved one will cast our souls down to darkness or lift them up to the heights of sublime joy. Even so did her words call me back from the dark depths of despair. I clasped her close to my heart and we made many vows, as lovers will, and with those vows we bound our hearts and souls together for all time and eternity, and we made promises to each other that the one whose soul was first called hence to the great unknown should, when the hands of time pointed to the hour of our going, come and lead us on to our final abode, be it the christian's paradise or the pagan's valley of moonlight, for, 'after

all, Lope, dear,' she said, 'I think your valley of moonlight is only the story of our own beautiful paradise, differently told, for was it not a pleasant valley watered by many rivers? and God shed the light of his love over all the place.' I know not, senor, if it be true or not, but this I know, that we noted not the passing of the time until the sun was hiding behind the hills, and the evening light was falling over the river. We made haste to return and our hearts were filled with fear lest Dolores be not home before her father returned. It was even so, senor; the villain was waiting for us, and an evil time we had. He cursed like a very demon and laid violent hands upon Dolores. I was blinded with rage and would have cut off his head with my bolo, but as I rushed upon him Dolores cried out, 'touch him not, Lope, remember he is my father.' I held my hand and did not slay him. Dolores told him she loved me better than all else in life, and if we could not wed she would return to the convent and never come forth again. Then the evil one filled his heart with cunning and he spoke words of deceit. He said:

"If it is true that you can live only for him then it were better for me to take him for a son, than to have my little Dolores hide those pretty eyes behind a convent wall, but I am a poor man, and I had expected you to wed some one who could provide for my old age. But if you are willing to remain unwed for a year, I will then give you to him. You are both over young to wed, and then, Lope has yet to make a business for himself.' Dolores was mad with joy; she embraced her father with much tenderness, but I was not so overcome with joy, for

I had seen through the blackness of his soul and knew that he was not to be trusted. Yes, there was an evil light in the old villain's eyes and I felt in my heart that it was only lies that he spoke to gain time to work out some wicked plan of his own, but for a while all things went well with us.

As I could speak the English language pretty well I was taken on as interpreter at the warehouse belonging to Arnold's father. I was very happy. I counted the days as they came and went, and the time drew near when I should claim my bride. Eight months of the year had gone by; light was my heart, and high my hopes; then came a time when I was sent down the coast to where Senor Travers had a trading post. My heart was heavy with the thought of parting from Dolores, but as I would only be gone for ten days or so, I laughed my sorrow down and told my sweet one, when I bid her good bye, that I would bring her many pretty presents to be used as wedding finery. Senor Mendeze was in a happy mood. He bid me a kindly good bye, and also borrowed a little money from me. The days came and passed by; my heart was filled with songs of joy. There came no premonition of the dark cloud that was about to fall upon me and blot out forever the joy of living. Upon the tenth day from my parting with Dolores, I returned home and made haste to fly to my love, but there was no loved one to greet me. She was gone. Yes, senor, my sweet Dolores was gone. The woman with whom they had been lodging told me that there had been much scolding and angry talking from the Senor Mendeze, and that poor Dolores had wept much.

They had gone, so she understood, to one of the northern provinces to take up some work that had been offered to the senor. They had been gone four days. There had been a packet left for me. She handed it to me and I walked away, but I knew not where my steps were leading me. I was like unto one who walks in his sleep, so dazed was I. On and on I went until I came to the river. I sat down and opened the packet and tried to read the words Dolores had written. Her father, she said, had been offered the post of scribano or secretary to an old friend of his, and so they had gone on to take up the work offered by Don Miguel Anglar, who held a high office in the province of Bantang and had his quarters at San Luca. Her father had found it necessary to start at once, and had insisted upon her going with him. She had begged of him to leave her with some one in Manila until I should return and wed her, but he became very angry and declared it was not to be thought of; that he should not leave her any place without his protection; that she owed obedience to him, her father, and if she would not obey him as a daughter should he would part us forever. But if she would go with him and obey him, he swore upon the crucifix, that when the year was up he would bring her down and we should wed.

“ ‘And Lope, dear, what could I do? It is true the law of the land and the church bids me yield obedience unto my father. Dear love, you will understand by the anguish of thine own heart, what this parting means to me. Since my father told me yesterday that I must go with him I have stretched out my hands to you

a hundred times and called to you, but you can not come to me. If I could only look upon your face once more and feel the warm clasp of your hand it would give me courage, but you are not here, and ere the sun rises to-morrow we will start upon our journey and I feel as tho I was about to tread the path that leads to death, but my heart I leave with you. No other love have I ever known, and, dear one, if aught should happen to prevent our meeting again in this world, remember I have sworn to love even beyond the grave, and I pray that my love may be the guiding star of thy life, that will lead thee on and on until we meet again. Farewell, dear love; think often of your broken-hearted Dolores. I can write no more for the tears are falling from my eyes like rain. My father has just come in and bids me tell you he will send you some word when we reach San Luca.'

"I went home to my uncle's house. I felt the need of his advice and sympathy, but again the fates were against me—he was away conducting a retreat at one of the convents, so I went to my friend Arnold and laid bare to him my heart's bitterness, and he held my hands and spoke words of encouragement to me and the burden of my sorrow became somewhat lighter. It was Arnold who proposed that we should go to San Luca. I did not believe that Senor Mendeze would bring Dolores back to me, for Don Miguel Anglar was a widower, a fat old pig, but he had much money and I had no doubt but what Senor Mendeze intended to use Dolores' youth and beauty to trap him into matrimony with her, and so get a large dowery for himself. In a fortnight we were all

ready, and in the cool of the evening we set forth, our intentions were to travel all night and lay by during the day, and so avoid the extreme heat. There was in the party Arnold, myself and Jasper Blogget, an old sailor who had been for many years in the employ of Senor Travers, Arnold's father. He had been working on one of the boats that run along the coast to the different trading posts. He was anxious to see some of the inland parts of the island and, like Arnold, was in high spirits over the adventure. They were both hoping that something exciting would happen. Little any of us thought how soon their wishes were to be granted. No premonition came to us of the torture we were about to undergo, of the horrors our eyes were soon to behold; no warning voice spoke to our hearts of the grotto of the gods, the pit of flame, or the cave of death. We set forth on stout ponies, well armed, and our saddle bags packed with provisions.

"We were going to Bong-a-Bong, and then over to the Cagayan river, up which we intended to travel by some of the native boats that had brought down loads of hemp and was going back empty. Nothing of any importance happened until we reached the Cagayan river. We soon found a boatman that was willing to take us up the river in his boat. San Luca was in the province of a civilized tribe of natives, but just above them the country was inhabited by a wild tribe—they were cannibals and did eat the bodies of their victims and hang the heads upon bamboo poles about their huts. They had many gods, and when the juju tree was budding out they made much sacrifice to their gods; they

made war upon other tribes and took many captives, and woe be to the white traveler that would cross their path at such a time, as a white man's head was thought to be a potent charm to drive away evil spirits, and, too, they liked to eat the white man's flesh. They would lie in wait about the passes in the hills, or in lonely places along the river ready to pounce upon whomsoever might pass that way. They were devils, incarnate, and had no fear of anyone. Only a few years before they had come down the river in their canoes to within a few miles of San Luca and carried off a party of Spaniards that chanced to be upon the river when night came on. Only one escaped with his life. A company of Spanish soldiers that was sent out after them were all massacred, and their heads cut off. Our boatman told us that he would be glad of our company, as he was afraid to travel in a small party, for the *Gadanese was making war up the Ibancs. He had seen several small parties of Gadanese as he came down the river, but as there had been a number of boats coming down together they had not molested them, but had made a pretense of fishing. His words caused me to feel very anxious, not on our own account, but for the safety of Dolores. I thought the morning would never come when we were to start up the river. There were several boats going up the river to points near San Luca, so we all traveled together, and there was quite a large party of us. It took eight days to run up to San Luca, and eight long days they seemed to me. The others

* See our Islands and their people.

enjoyed the beautiful scenery along the river and as nothing happened to cause us any fear there was no reason why we should not have been happy, but I was under a dark cloud of despondency, and try as I would, I somehow could not free myself from it. The wind among the palms sounded like a requiem over dead hopes; the ripple of the water, the rustle of the reeds and the cry of the night birds all seemed like spirit voices calling in mournful accents the name of Dolores.

“As we had seen nothing of the Gadanese while coming up the river we were less anxious on that point, and when we reached San Luca I felt lighter of heart and thought only of seeing my love. We went to a native inn, and after putting on some clean apparel and refreshing ourselves with a good supper and a bottle of excellent wine, we set forth for Don Miguel's. We soon reached his home and requested an interview, but the servant who had admitted us and took our message returned and said that Don Miguel was ill and in great trouble and could not see us until the morrow. I was so disappointed at the thought of not seeing Dolores that evening that I could not go away without making one more effort, so I wrote a few words in Spanish, telling Don Miguel that we were close friends of Senor Mendeze and very anxious to see him, and asked him to kindly inform us where he might be found. I gave the note to the servant and told him to take it to his master. He returned in a few moments and asked us to wait upon Don Miguel in his bedroom, as he was too ill to come to us. As soon as he had greeted us he asked in Spanish what we knew of Senor Mendeze. I

was surprised at the question, but answered that we had known the senor for many years, and that his daughter was my promised wife; that he had started with Dolores, several weeks before, for San Luca to take a situation under Don Miguel, and I, being absent at the time they left Manila, was very anxious to see them again and had come to San Luca for that purpose.

“‘It is true,’ answered Don Miguel, ‘that I was expecting Senor Mendeze to take up some work with me, but he said nothing about his daughter. It is true he did say in his last writing to me that he had a pleasant surprise in store for me. And this daughter, was she young and good to look upon? Was she dark like her mother?’

“‘No,’ I said, ‘she was as white as her father, and young and very beautiful, and as I said before, she was my promised wife.’

“‘Ah, just so,’ he mused; ‘young and beautiful,’ and the fat old pig lay back among his pillows and half closed his pigish eyes. I was tempted to strike him dead.

“‘Don Miguel,’ I cried, ‘if Senor Mendeze and his daughter are not here and you know aught of them pray tell me at once, for I have been very anxious regarding their safety. There is much talk of the savages making war upon the natives of this province.’

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘it is now the time of year when they offer up sacrifice to their gods, and they are out looking for human victims. Now listen, young man; I fear I have evil news for you. My servant told you I was ill and in trouble. Well, it was this same Senor

Mendeze that caused my mind to be troubled. Nothing certain, you understand, but as I was expecting him about that time, there might have been a chance of its being him, but until you spoke of the daughter I had hoped that it was not him. A pest upon him,' he cried. 'Why could he not have said he had a daughter and was bringing her up with him. Then I should have sent an escort for them. Well, if his head now hangs before the hut of a savage priest it serves him right for being a fool.'

" 'For the love of all the gods,' I cried, 'what mean you?'

" 'I mean this,' he said. 'Three days ago a native that had been up the river in his canoe stopped here and told of having seen the savages along the river some miles above here. He said that he had seen a barge on which were three native barge men, also a white man and a young white girl. The barge was putting in to shore not far from where he had seen the savages. He had shouted a warning to them and paddled on as fast as he could. He had looked back and saw that they were already in the hands of the savages. Knowing he could not help them he had hurried on lest he too should be taken by them. I was expecting Senor Mendeze, and naturally my thoughts turned to him, but he had said nothing of bringing a woman with him.'

" 'But,' I cried, 'you surely sent out a party to look for them?'

" 'No,' he said, 'I was not certain it was him, and then, too, this being the time of tax collection my soldiers

are all out through the province doing escort duty to the collectors.'

'But now that you know it must have been him you will surely try to rescue him?'

"'Boy,' he said, 'you talk foolish; even if the soldiers were all here there would be no chance of rescue. It has been three days since he was taken and it would be at least three days more before we could reach the nearest Gadanese village. They would be killed and eaten before that time. No, it is no use now; it is too late; besides, I have no one to send.'

"'But you will see that we have someone to guide us?' said Arnold, who could understand Spanish well enough to catch the drift of our talk.

"'No,' he answered, 'I will do nothing so foolish, for, hark you, young man, I know this part of the country and its people, and I know that it is now too late to save them, and I advise you not to risk your own lives in a foolish and vain attempt.'

"Senor, his words filled me with anger, so cold and heartless they sounded. I cursed him in Spanish and called him a pig. Arnold grabbed me by the arm and forced me out of the room, and in my madness I struck at him, my best friend, but he finally got me away from Don Miguel's house, and then he did chide me for giving way to my anger just when I should be calm and sensible. His words quieted me and we consulted together, the three of us, to see what we should do. Jasper thought, as had Don Miguel, that it would be useless to attempt a rescue after so long a time, 'but,' said he, 'if you think best to try it I am with you until

death.' I happened to think of hearing some say that the Gadanese only offered up their sacrifice when the moon was at the full, and it would not be full for four days yet. I told Arnold and Jasper that I could not expect them to risk their lives in my behalf. Jasper only laughed in his quiet way, but Arnold fired up and asked me if I thought him a coward. So I said no more, but thanked them and we struck the hands of friendship, and my heart went out to them in gratitude, and I loved them more than ever. Arnold said that only cowards would hesitate to make an effort to find out if it was Senor Mendeze and Dolores who had been taken prisoners.

"We bought some provisions, a few bottles of wine, and a flask of good brandy. We each had two good revolvers and plenty of ammunition. Arnold had a large hunting knife and I had my bolo. We also bought each of us a water bottle or canteen, such as the Spanish soldiers have. After we had everything packed and ready we made inquiry as to the route we should take that would bring us to the nearest Gadanese village, but we got very little information. Some thought the best way would be to go up the river and then strike across the country to the hills. Everyone warned us against going near the Gadanese at that time of year. We tried to get some one to guide us, but no one was willing to go with us. We finally found an old man who told us that years ago he had been out with a hunting party. They had gone up to the hills to hunt the wild goat and had come one night close enough to a Gadanese village to see the light of their fires. They had turned

back at once and had made their way down a sort of ravine that looked as if it had been, at one time, the bed of a creek. They traveled down this ravine all night and in the morning had passed a place where the sides of the ravine was very high and straight up, like a wall, and all over the wall hung masses of grego vines. A short distance from that place they had come to where a spring was gushing up among the rocks. They were very tired and after they had filled their bottles at the spring they decided to go back and crawl in behind those vines and sleep a few hours. They had been much surprised to discover a little cave behind the vines; it was dry and cool and the bottom was covered with fine white sand. They had remained there all day and felt secure, as there was no evidence that anyone had ever been there before. He gave us some directions and we set forth.

“Luck was with us, for on the second morning we came to the spring. It was filled up with sticks and moss. We cleaned it out the best we could and the water soon bubbled up clear and cool. We soon had our bottles filled and then refreshed ourselves by bathing our faces in the cold water. After a short while we went on looking for the wall of rock and the cave behind the vines. We soon came to the place; there was such a mass of vines we could hardly creep in behind them, but we finally found the entrance to the cave. It was as the old man told us—cool and dry. We rested and refreshed our tired bodies with food and wine; we longed to lay down on the white sand to sleep a while, but as the moon was now coming to the full, we thought

we had better go on and get as near to the village as we could. It was hard traveling over the rocks in the ravine and we were worn out for want of sleep. Each article we carried had become a burden to us, so we made up our minds to leave most of the things in the cave. We took only a small portion of the provisions; we also left the wine and brandy. We went on up the ravine until the shadows of night were falling around us. By that time we were so completely worn out that we could no longer keep upon our feet. We crawled in behind some rocks and went to sleep. For me it was a night of dreams, fantastic monsters chased each other around me, and I dreamed that I heard the voice of Dolores calling to me, 'Lope, Lope; come and save me!' I cried out that I was coming, then I woke up and saw it was day—the sun was just peeping up over the crest of the hills and over me there hung the most fiendish and diabolical face ever seen outside of the pits of Hades. A black, distorted face, with thick lips turned back showing long gleaming teeth, white and sharp, like a jackals. I cried out in fright and sprang to my feet. I then saw that we were in the midst of a dozen or more of the hideous devils; resistance was useless. They took away our knives, revolvers and ammunition, and the most of our clothing; then they grabbed hold of us and set off up the ravine. We were stiff and lame, our feet were bruised and blistered from walking over the sharp rocks, but they showed us no mercy. After dragging us up the ravine for about two miles they came to a cave or grotto in the side of the hill. Into this they dragged us and left us bound hand and foot with bejuca

rope, and, Senor, to this day I almost faint when I think of the horrors of that place. But just then I was so weak and tired that I cared very little what became of me. It was cool in the cave and I soon fell asleep. I must have slept for several hours. It was not yet midday when I went to sleep, and now it was evening. The opening of the grotto was to the west and I could see from where I lay the setting sun, like a huge ball of fire, sinking down behind a bank of purple clouds. For some moments I lay watching it in a drowsy sort of way, for the sleep was still heavy upon me and I did not realize where I was. Then the events of the past twenty-four hours came rushing through my mind and I remembered where I was. I struggled to a sitting posture; I could not rise to my feet, for my legs were bound at the knees and ankles. I could see nothing of Arnold or Jasper, and I cursed myself for sleeping like a pig while they, perchance, had been massacred. I was in such agony at the thought that I groaned aloud. Just then I heard a hist breathed softly in the darkness behind me; at the same time there came a sound like some one moving in a stealthy manner over the floor of the cave. Again came the hist; this time much nearer to me, then the voice of Arnold whispering in English for me to lay down and work myself back a little so that my head would be in the shadows. I worked myself close to Arnold.

“ ‘Now listen,’ he whispered, ‘and no matter what you hear, make no outcry, for our very lives and the lives of others depend upon our calmness, for I am sure there are others besides ourselves held captive in this

cave, and now lay still and listen, and if the guard comes in pretend that you are still sleeping.'

"I listened for some time but no sound reached my ears except that of our own breathing and the loud beating of my heart; then I heard a sort of moaning sound. I could not tell at first from whence it came, or what it was, but as it grew louder I could make out that it came from the back of the cave. It sounded like the sobbing of a child. I raised my head and looked at Arnold, but he whispered to me to keep quiet. Then I heard two words spoken low but distinctly. It was by a great effort that I kept from crying out, for they were the very words that I had heard in my dreams as I slept behind the rock. It was Dolores calling my name in soft supplicating tones: 'Lope, Lope!' I tried to cry out to her but I was so overcome with horror now that I realized beyond a doubt that she was in the hands of those painted fiends that I could not speak. My words seemed to come up in my throat and choke me. Arnold was whispering something to me but I could not understand what he was saying, for he was rolling away from me, but I heard voices at the entrance of the cave, then everything seemed to grow dark and all things faded from my mind.

"When I came to myself again I was outside of the cave. The cool evening air revived me somewhat and I looked around for the others. They were lying on the ground a short distance from where I lay. I thought our time had surely come. There were quite a number of the savages, both men and women. They crowded up close to Arnold and Jasper but paid very little atten-

tion to me. Poor old Jasper was old and grim and not much to look upon, but they seemed to be much taken with Arnold, the women especially. They looked with wonder at his blue eyes and long silky yellow hair. Some of them went up to him and touched, with their fingers, the soft fair flesh of his arms and shoulders, and some of them pulled a few of the golden hairs from his head and seemed to think them valuable charms or amulets. Several of the head men were holding council together and after much talk they gave some orders and two of the women went away, returning in a short time with some bread cakes made from the sago palm, and also some goat's milk, which they gave us. From the few words that I could understand of their dialect they did not intend to put us to death just then, but intended us for some other time of celebration not far distant. So they gave us food that we might not die before they were ready to sacrifice us. They put the food to our lips but Arnold pretended he could not eat that way and made signs to them to unbind our hands, and this they finally did, standing close around us with their spears raised ready to strike us if we tried to escape. Arnold gave me a look and I understood the meaning of it. There had been of my mother's people an old man who did tricks of magic. He had taught many of them to me when I was a little chap, and I had often helped him work them. One of the tricks was to hold my hands in such a way that no matter who bound them I could always free myself. I had often worked the old trick for Arnold. I had been so drunken with sleep when the savages had dragged me from behind

the rocks and bound me that no thought of it had come to my mind, but now that Arnold's look had recalled it to me I was determined to try it, not that my hopes of escaping were very great, but then life is sweet and there was Dolores to think of. The twilight was fast fading away, giving place to the dark shadows of night; the number of savages had increased until the whole plateau in front of the cave was swarming with them. They lighted a number of large torches that was made of bunches of dry wild hemp fastened to tall stakes driven into the ground. As fast as one burned away others were fastened up and lighted. A most fearsome sight it now was that we looked upon. With the lighting of the torches the savages had commenced to dance and blow upon horns of some kind, and beat upon tomtoms. They went leaping and whirling about in the wavering, flickering light of the torches. Some of them were armed with long bolos and others with huge spears, their ugly tattooed faces wearing a most fiendish look; their eyes glowed like coals of fire. I became sick and faint with apprehension. I felt sure that when they had worked themselves up to the highest pitch of frenzy some of us would fall a victim to their lust of blood, and there was Dolores, perchance she was even now bound and ready for the sacrifice. Just opposite the cave on the other side of the ravine were a number of nipa huts. I had noticed them while it was still light. All at once the dancing and noise ceased, the women fell to the ground and the men stood with their arms raised above their heads, their spears and bolos pointing skyward. There came an unearthly wailing call from the horns;

three times it sounded, now moaning like a stricken deer or shrieking out a defiance to heaven, then dying away like the last agonizing pleading of a lost soul.

“While the horns were sounding the last call a dozen or more of the savages grabbed up torches and ran down the hill and across the ravine in the direction of the huts. Midway between them and the ravine they put the torches to a huge pile of brush and wood, and as the flames leaped up there was an exultant yell from the savages; several of them laid hold of us and dragged us into the cave and threw us in a heap in one corner. The others had brought in the torches and ranged themselves in a circle around some object in the center of the place. Again the horns sounded, this time like the howling of hungry hyenas. The women shrieked and howled with them, then all except the torch bearers and the highpriest prostrated themselves upon the ground, and we saw in the center of the cave a most hideous looking idol. The body was like that of a large ape, but the head!—never, Senor, was there anything like it. It was like unto that of the buffalo, inasmuch as it had wide-spreading horns and great, round, glowing eyes, but the jaws were long like the jaws of a shark, with great rows of gleaming teeth. At its feet was a long table or altar of stone, heaped up with branches of the juju tree. There were clusters of the same around its body and head. While the priest chanted and the horns sounded a mournful refrain two of the savages walked to the back of the cave. My heart gave a great thump and then seemed to stand still. I could hear the heavy breathing of Arnold and Jasper, for they, like myself,

believed Dolores was to be the victim. When they returned bearing a body between them I could feel the blood curdle in my veins. Everything grew dim before me; the faintness soon passed; I opened my eyes and saw the body of Senor Mendeze lying upon the altar. The head had been severed from the body and was set between the jaws of the idol. The blood was dripping down, the women were catching the drops as they fell. It was the most sickening thing I ever saw. They seemed to be in a perfect frenzy, holding up their hands to catch the red drops. They would then smear it over their own and each others' faces. The priest was catching that which run from the neck and was sprinkling it over the men. They became frenzied and danced and howled and licked the blood from their fingers. Several of them rushed upon the body and I expected to see them tear it to pieces and devour it, but they grabbed it up and dashed out of the cave, followed by the whole horde of shrieking fiends. One of them as he ran by reached up and impaled the head upon his spear, and I have no doubt but that it hung for many a day before his hut. Two or three of the torches had fallen to the ground but were still burning and we could see that all but one of the savages had gone. He was standing at the entrance of the cave looking with sullen longing in the direction of the bonfire.

"Arnold rolled close to me and whispered, 'Now is the time to make an effort to get away.' I was so weak that I doubted much if I could free my hands, but Arnold kept whispering that our own and Dolores' life depended on my releasing myself and them, until with

the strength of desperation I managed to slip my hands from the bejuco rope that bound them. All of the skin and much of the flesh went with the rope. Senor, you can see that this hand is not as large as the other one. I soon had my limbs free and in a few seconds had the others unbound. We found that we could not stand upon our feet until we rubbed our limbs, so numb and lifeless were they. Now that we were unbound, how were we to find Dolores and get by the sentinel? But Jasper said he would take care of that gentleman. There was lying not far from us one of the torch stakes. It had been cut from a live ebony tree and was as heavy and hard as iron. He crawled over until he could reach it. We all laid down again and Jasper commenced to groan. In a few moments the sentinel heard him and came running back to us. Jasper kept moaning like he was in great pain; the savage muttered some words and stooped over him and before he could straighten up Jasper hit him such a blow on the head that we could hear the bones crack and he fell to the ground dead.

"It was now my turn to act. I being dark colored there was not so much danger in my going to the entrance of the cave to reconnoiter. The fire across the ravine had died down to a mass of red hot embers, and I could see them placing some object over them. I became sick and faint for a moment, for I knew the body of Senor Mendeze was about to furnish their feast, but I dare not think of it. There was no one in sight on our side of the ravine, so I ran back and we started to look for Dolores. We went back to where we thought she was when we heard her voice. We soon

came upon her. She was lying on the ground at the back of the cave. I picked her up and carried her to the entrance of the cave. I knew not if she was living or dead, but she was warm and Arnold thought she had fainted from fright at the noise. He said we must hurry away before we were discovered. We would try to creep to some bushes that were about a hundred feet from the entrance. We thought if we could make our way back to the place where we had left our provisions and ammunition we could stay there for several days and rest up. We were about to start—I had picked Dolores up and was going to bind her to me so I could carry her as I crawled across the plateau to reach the bushes, but thought I had better see if the way was clear for us. It was well I did, for as I looked I saw that two of the savages had crossed the ravine and were coming direct to the cave. I ran back to the others and told them to get back out of sight, which they did, taking Dolores with them. As the savages entered the cave I walked towards the back part of it. It was evident that they thought I was the guard, for one of them came walking towards me, talking as he came. I did not turn around but walked on until I was well back in the shadows. When he came up to me he was still talking. As he came close behind me I turned and sprang upon him like a beast of prey. I clutched his throat with both hands and his words died away in a gurgling moan. But before I could strangle the life out of him he slashed at me with his bolo. I felt a stinging pain in the side of my face; he had laid open my cheek, and that is how I came by this scar that has made

me so ugly to look upon. I heard a scuffle in the front of the cave and knew that Arnold and Jasper were in combat with the other savage. He cried out once or twice, but not very loud. Then I heard the cracking of his skull and knew the torch stake had done its work well. I ran back to them but not before I had picked up the bolo that had fallen from the hands of the brute I had choked to death, and to make sure he would not revive I drove the knife to his heart again and again. I found that Arnold had received a slight spear wound in the shoulder; he declared it was nothing and bid us make haste to leave the cave before any more of the savages came across the ravine. I picked up Dolores and we crawled out of the cave. I gave the bolo to Arnold to carry. He had also the spear that had wounded him; Jasper still clutched the torch stake. In the west the sky was overcast with dark clouds, and there came a low rumble of thunder. The savages were moving about the pit of fire, and the wind brought to our nostrils the smell of burning flesh. We made the distance from the cave to the bushes in safety, then we ran and stumbled on the best we could. I was weak and exhausted, and Dolores was a dead weight in my arms. I tried to shield her body, but she, as well as ourselves, received painful scratches from the bushes through which we ran. We finally reached the ravine and stopped to listen and regain our breath a little, for we were pretty well winded by that time.

“Senor, you have seen the suddenness and severity of the storms that sweep over these islands. We had rested only a short time when the wind commenced to

blow a gale, deep peals of thunder rolled and echoed among the hills. Arnold was nervous and covered his eyes with his hands to shut out the glare of the lightning. An old sailor, like Jasper, was used to storms and it had little effect on his nerves. To me there had ever been something exhilarating about a storm, and as the wind went sweeping down the ravine I could feel the blood go tingling through my veins, and the rain as it splashed and pattered down on our tired and half-naked bodies revived us somewhat. We moved onward at a faster pace and reached the rocks behind which we were sleeping when the savages came upon us, but we did not stop. The rain was by that time coming down in torrents and the ravine was filling with water. Arnolds shoulder had commenced to pain him and the wound in my cheek burned like fire; Jasper insisted upon taking turns with me in bearing Dolores. The water in the ravine had risen until it was up to our knees. We were becoming exhausted, but still stumbled on. Our one chance of safety lay in reaching the little cave behind the vines before daylight. Once there, we could rest for a while. We did not think the savages would follow us, as they would think that searching parties would be sent out to look for us, and then, too, they would be satisfied for the present with the feast they had just partaken of, besides being weary from dancing and yelling all night.

“Well, senior, the sun was just coming up as we were creeping into our hiding place. We found everything as we had left it and was glad to get the food and the brandy. Dolores had come out of the dead

faint that she had been in, but was delirious and kept moaning and muttering in an incoherent manner. We made her as comfortable as we could and gave her some brandy. Jasper washed and dressed the wound in my face and Arnold's shoulder the best he could. The others lay down to sleep, but tired as I was, I could not close my eyes while Dolores was moaning so pitifully. I sat down beside her and held her little hands in mine, poor little hands; they were hot like fire, and moved and fluttered like little wounded birds. Ah, senor, words can never tell how I suffered, how every moan that came from her lips tore at my heart like wild beasts. All day I sat by her side holding her hands and giving her little drops of brandy and water. Jasper roused up once or twice and offered to watch by her until I could get some sleep, but I could not leave her. I knew that the time was close at hand when I would have to give her up. I could even then feel the presence of the grim monster, death, hovering about us. It had stopped raining at midday, and the sun was shining brightly, as I could see when I peeped through the vines at the entrance of the cave, but just as it was sinking to rest behind the hills, and the birds were singing their evening songs, Dolores opened her eyes and looked at me, and whispered:

“‘Thanks be to all the saints, I am in heaven at last. But when did you come, Lope, dear?’

“I clasped her to my heart and great tears fell from my eyes. I was so choked with emotion I could hardly speak. I told her she was not dead and in heaven, but that we both lived and were together again. Then the

memory of all the past misery she had undergone seemed to rush through her mind, and she cried out that she was a prisoner, that the savages had taken her captive. She begged me to save her. I told her she was no longer with the savages, but with me and in safety.

“‘So you came,’ she said, ‘in answer to my prayers. Oh! how I did pray to God to send you to me, and once I thought I heard your voice. But where is my father? Oh! where is he?’

“‘I could not tell her of the fate that had overtaken him; I could not tell her how the blood had dripped down from his head as it set between the jaws of the idol, so I lied to her and told her that Senor Mendeze had escaped and was now beyond the reach of the savages.

“‘But where are we, and how did we get here?’

“‘I explained to her how we escaped and traveled down the ravine in the storm, bringing her all the way in our arms.

“‘Oh, my love,’ she murmured, ‘you have saved me, but, dear one, it will not be for long. I seem to hear God’s voice calling me even now.’

“‘Say not those words,’ I cried. I can not give you up. Pray to your God to leave you with me a little longer, but, if He will not, then I will go hence with you.’

“‘But, dear Lope,’ she said, ‘you can not go until God is ready to call you. Now listen, dear love, I am going from you, but remember, I am going to that place of bliss where no sorrow can enter in, and though my heart’s best love is thine, we must not rebel against the

All-Father's will, and if He calls me now, it will not be for all time that we part, for our souls are bound together in love, and life is love, and love can never die. The days may roll on into months, the months into years, and the years may be many, but the time will surely come when the broken ends of the thread of our destiny shall be spliced together to be woven into the web of happiness. Be it years, or only a few days, this I say to you, dear one, live on in the way thy heart tells thee is best, and be ever ready so that when the call comes you can throw down the burden of life and follow on, and remember I have promised to come for you. And now, dear Lope, give me your promise to do even as I have asked you to do; promise that you will not try to take the life that God gave you, but to keep the memory of our love ever before you as a light that will pierce the gloom of thy sorrow.'

"I promised to do even as she bid me and I kissed her many times. I asked her how she came to fall into the hands of the savages. She said they had come up the river on a barge; they had decided not to camp and rest that last night, but pushed on expecting to reach San Luca by morning, but there had fallen a thick black fog over the river and they had passed San Luca without knowing it. When the sun came out and the fog lifted they saw that they were several miles beyond their destination. They had pushed into the shore to rest and get their breakfast, and all at once a native came down the river in a canoe and shouted to them to get out of there, for the bank of the river a little above them was swarming with wild men. They had made all haste

to get away but had hardly gotten away from the shore when a horde of the savages dashed out from among the bushes. A dozen or more of them plunged into the river and were soon clambering up over the sides of the barge. Her father had shot two of them and the barge men had used their paddles to beat them off, but they were soon overpowered and bound. The native in the canoe had gotten away and her father had hoped he would reach San Luca and send a party of Spanish soldiers after them. They had walked all day and she had become too tired to walk any longer. One of the savages had picked her up and slung her over his shoulder and she had fainted and knew nothing more until she came to herself in the grotto of the gods. She did not see her father again, but while she lay bound in the cave she thought she heard his voice, but she was in a kind of trance and soon everything faded from her mind and she knew no more until she awoke and found herself with me.

“‘And now, dear Lope,’ she said, ‘I am so tired; lay me down and I will sleep, and do you too lay down and rest.’

“My sleep was like the sleep of the dead, so worn out was I. The day had dawned when Jasper roused me up. He said Arnold was out of his head, and was burning with fever. I got upon my feet but was dizzy and weak, and the wound in my cheek pained me. Dolores was lying very still and I thought she was sleeping and would be stronger when she awoke. We did what we could for Arnold, but he was in a high fever, and tossed and rolled about babbling of the grotto of the

gods, the pit of flame and heads hung on spears, and he begged us to take his head down and give it back to him. My heart was heavy with fear lest he, my best friend, would also go from me. I was filled with remorse for letting my own trouble lead him into danger. I was so filled with grief, and the pain in my face so great, I could hardly keep upon my feet. I went over and sat down by Dolores; I took one of her hands in mine; it was cold—oh, so cold. I cried out to Jasper and raised her up in my arms, but she was dead. Her soul had taken wings and soared away to the heaven she was always talking of. Upon her dead face there was a look of peace, her lips were parted as though her soul had whispered a sweet farewell to me ere it took its flight to worlds unknown. My heart was filled with black despair, but I remembered the promise I had given her and it comforted me somewhat. We buried her there in the little cave, Jasper and I scooping out a shallow grave in the fine white sand with our hands. All that night I lay upon her grave and watered it with my tears. Poor Arnold had become so ill that we decided that Jasper should try to make his way to San Luca and get, if he could, some one to come back with him to help take Arnold on to that place. He had been gone for three days and I was there alone with my dead love and almost dead friend. The food and water was all gone. Arnold had begged for hours for a drink. I had made up my mind to go to the spring where we had filled the bottle on the morning we had found the cave behind the vines. I had parted the vines to reconnoiter before I left the cave; I heard a tramp-

ing of horses and then someone speaking in Spanish; the next moment I heard Jasper's voice, brave old Jasper. He was there, and with him several Spanish soldiers and a medico (doctor) from San Luca. They had provisions and several stout ponies. They also had a cart for Arnold, but had left it down the ravine. They could not bring it any further over the rocks. The doctor went to work to revive Arnold. He gave him some medicine and dressed the wound in his shoulder; he also dressed the wound in my cheek. We then placed Arnold on a piece of canvas that they had brought with them and four of the soldiers carried him down to the cart. I lingered behind the rest a bit—I wanted to be alone when I bid a last farewell to the place where my lost love lay sleeping. There by her grave I vowed to live on as she wished me to do, but oh how hard it was to leave my darling lying there all alone. I called out her name until the cave echoed and re-echoed with my cries of Dolores! Dolores! Oh, my dear, lost love, Dolores.

“Well, senor, I will not detain thee any longer. You have been very patient. I will only say that we reached San Luca and after we had rested and Arnold had become able to travel we started for Manila. We made better time going down the river than we did coming up, and on the ninth day we reached home.

“Jasper, the grim old sailor, was little the worse for the adventure, but I had left the best part of me buried in the little cave with Dolores. Arnold was very ill by the time we reached home. He was a nervous wreck. Poison of the blood had set in from the wound in his shoulder, and he too, after days of suffering, went away

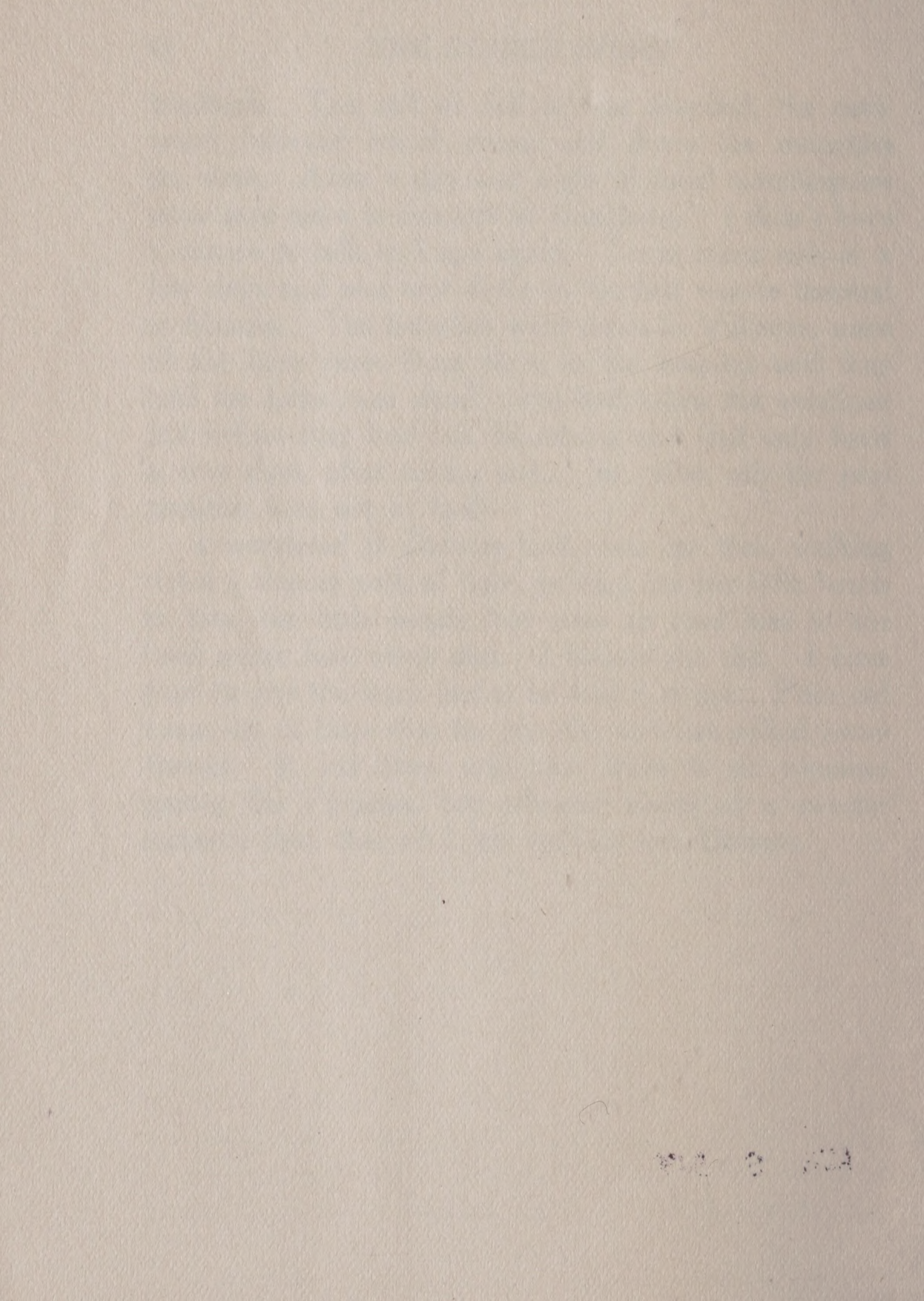
from me, and I was desolate. Yes, they were both gone, the friend of my heart and the love of my life. I lived on and there came into my life some rays of sunshine, the love of my old uncle, and now you have struck the hands of friendship with me and I have opened my heart to you. I have showed you all the things that were buried therein, and now the time draws near when I shall go hence to my reward, and Dolores will come for me, the wall of mist will roll away, and we will dwell together in the land of light, the land where love never dies. And now, senor, I will bid you goodnight. I hope that you too may find the moon valley."

I clasped his hand and bid him goodnight. Just then call to quarters sounded and I hurried back to camp. Taps never sounded so mournful as they did that night upon the mountain, each note seemed like a voice of the far away whispering of love that never dies, or softly calling Dolores, Dolores! And long after every one else in camp was sleeping, I lay looking at the moon thinking of all the things Lope had told me of, the cave where Dolores was buried, the shining path down which she came walking, the walls of mist, and the valley of moonlight, and when I did fall asleep it was only to dream of the grotto of the gods, the pit of fire, and altars decked out with flowers, and a whole regiment of grinning skulls went filing past me. I was glad when reveille sounded, and I awoke and saw the rosy streaks of dawn in the east, as the sun came up.

All was bustle about the camp after a breakfast of

hardtack. The call of fall in was sounded, the command forward march given, and down the mountain we went. After a day and night of hard marching we were once more in quarters at Biambang. I didn't have a chance to talk to Lope again. I was taken sick in a few days and was sent down to the first reserve hospital at Manila. The battalion went down to Villicens, some of the boys came from there to the hospital and they told me Lope was dead. He had taken the smallpox just before they had left Biambang and had only lived a few days after taking sick. So, after all, his premonition was not at fault.

I wondered if Dolores had come for him, walking down a shining path of light, holding out her little hands to him, the little hands that were to lead him to the land where love never dies. I believe she did. I have tried to give the story just as he told it to me. Poor old Lope, let us hope that for him the mist has rolled away forever. It has been said that there is no romance among the Filipinos, but whoever heard of a sweeter romance than that of Lope and his lost Dolores.



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